

National Work Zone Awareness Week Fact Sheet

National Work Zone Awareness Week (NWZAW) was established in December 15, 1999 when the American Traffic Safety Services Association (ATSSA), the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) signed an official “Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)” at the U.S.-DOT headquarters in Washington, D.C. The MOA tasked the three organizations to conduct a community awareness/media event every April (the usual beginning of the construction season) to raise public awareness of the hazards that exist for workers – and motorists – in roadway work zones. The campaign’s additional goal is to reduce accidents and injuries in roadway work zones.

The first national media “kick off” event was held in Springfield, Va. in April 2000. That event received significant media coverage and for the next several years, the event continues to draw state VIPs, elected officials, members of the media (local and national), law enforcement, emergency responders and most importantly – the families of those killed and injured in roadway work zones – as well as worker-survivors of accidents.

The original plan for the national kick-off event was to conduct an April event annually on a rotating basis between the Washington, D.C., Virginia and Maryland-DOTs. This worked as planned for several years, however, in 2007, the FHWA determined to kick-off the national event in a different state outside the DC/Va. /Md. metro area every other year for broader media coverage and public attention, returning the event to the DC metro area every other year.

In 2008, the event was held in Sacramento, Calif., 2009 in Washington, D.C., 2010 in New York City and 2011 in Maryland. The April 2012 will be held in the St. Louis, Mo. metro area (Theme – “*Don’t Barrel Through Work Zones*”). The Missouri event will be held at the Route 141 relocation project, Chesterfield, Missouri (St. Louis area) on April 23, beginning at 10 a.m. Central Time. FHWA Administrator Victor Mendez is expected to attend and present the National Work Zone Awareness Trophy to the Mo.-DOT. This new trophy will be rotated annually between host states for display at their respective headquarters. Missouri is the first state to receive the new trophy. The trophy will be on display in the ATSSA booth during the association’s Annual Convention and Traffic Expo in Tampa, Fla., Feb. 12-16, 2012.

Since the signing of the MOA, the NWZAW “Executive Committee” of ATSSA, AASHTO and the FHWA has grown to include the American Road and Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA), the Associated General Contractors of America (AGC), Va.-DOT, Md.-DOT and the D.C.-DOT. Every other year, the NWZAW Executive Committee selects a host-state for the kick-off media event based on that state’s successful work zone safety and community awareness programs.

Since the creation of NWZAW in 1999, nearly every state DOT has adopted a similar campaign locally to attract media and to raise community awareness. Some states have work zone safety mascots, websites, public service announcement campaigns, posters, their own local slogans (*‘Whose Life Is On The Line,’ ‘Slow For The Cone Zone,’* etc.) and many have assigned public affairs staff members full time to manage this important issue.

NWZAW 2012 is April 23 – 27, however, several states conduct the event during other weeks in April or May to accommodate their schedules.

Since 1969, ATSSA members have manufactured and installed the various roadway safety devices that motorists pass by or utilize every day. These products include guardrails, bright, highly-reflective signage, roadway striping, lighting, reflective apparel, and work zone safety equipment. ATSSA is headquartered in Fredericksburg, Va.

The point-of-contact for the national event is ATSSA's Director of Communications James Baron. He can be reached at (540) 368-1701, ext. 113, or by email at James.Baron@atssa.com.

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